

A group of five diverse children of various ethnicities are smiling and posing in a grassy field. One child is sitting on the shoulders of another, and they are all looking towards the camera with bright, happy expressions. The background is a soft-focus green field with trees.

Parent/Caregiver Guide for
**English Language
Development**







How Did We Get Here?

On March 4, 2021, the State Board of Education unanimously approved the 2020 Edition of the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards as the North Carolina ELD Standard Course of Study (NC ELD SCOS) for implementation in the 2022-2023 school year. The NC ELD standards serve as the framework that guides each Public School Unit (PSU) in the development of the curriculum and instruction of their English learners.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction English as a Second Language/Title III (NCDPI ESL)/Title III Team developed documents to support the implementation of the NC ELD SCOS. One of those support documents is the **Parent/Caregiver Guide for ELD**. This document is a guide to help parents/caregivers of English learners (ELs) understand the meaning of the EL identification process, the ELD Standards, and access resources to support at-home learning.

It is important that you, as your child's parent/caregiver, reach out to your child's school to learn more about the services and opportunities offered in your school community based on this guidance.





SECTION 1

What does it mean that my child is an English Learner (EL)?

This section includes the English learner (EL) identification process, the North Carolina EL identification and exit criteria, the annual English language proficiency assessment, your child’s EL Status, and a sample of the language instruction services that your child might receive.

SECTION 2

How does my child learn English at School?

This section explains the English Language Development (ELD) Standards that NC uses to support your child’s acquisition of social and academic English at school. You will learn about the progression of English language skills and the developmental expectations as your child moves through their different grade levels and eventually exits their EL status, achieving English proficiency.

SECTION 3

How do I help my child Succeed at School?

This section offers a set of strategies and online free resources in English and other languages to help you advocate for your child and help your child develop English language skills at home.

Disclaimer: Some links found in this document may take you to third-party websites of which NCDPI does not control and is not responsible for the content of such external web pages. NCDPI does not endorse and makes no warranties, representations, or undertakings relating to the content of third-party websites.



What does it mean that my child is an English Learner (EL)?

SECTION 1

This section includes the English learner (EL) identification process, the North Carolina EL identification and exit criteria, the annual English language proficiency assessment, your child’s EL Status, and a sample of the language instruction services that your child might receive.

The NCDPI also uses the term **Multilingual learner (ML)** to refer to ELs. While policy and legislation documents shared by your school may use the term EL, other documents may include ML. These terms are used interchangeably.





Enrollment

EL Identification Process

All North Carolina Public Schools are required to identify potential English learners (EL). When you enroll your child, you will complete a **Home Language Survey (HLS)**. If a language other than English is identified on that survey, a school representative may contact you to clarify some of the information you enter in the HLS. This conversation will help the school determine if your child needs to be assessed. If your child is transferring from another school, previous language proficiency assessment results may be used to determine their EL status. You should be notified of your child’s EL status within 30 days of your child’s enrollment of their eligibility (SBE, “Policy TEST-011”).



Screening

North Carolina EL Identification Criteria

The state of North Carolina is a member of the WIDA Consortium. This organization has developed a comprehensive system built on standards and assessments to support K-12 ELs. North Carolina uses the **WIDA Screener scores** in two or more of the language domains, listening, speaking, and reading and writing, to identify your child as a Multilingual learner. Your child’s school follows the criteria listed below to determine if your child requires EL services or not. You are informed about this process by the welcome center staff or the school’s EL teacher.

Depending on which semester of the school year you enroll your child in the school, the EL identification criteria are as follows:

SEMESTER

1

First Semester:

- Kindergarten students who score below a 5.0 in either listening and speaking domains
- First-grade students who score below a 5.0 in listening, speaking, reading, or writing
- Grades 2-12 students who score below level 5 in at least one language domain or below level 5 in the composite score

SEMESTER

2

Second Semester:

- Kindergarten students who score below a 5.0 in at least one language domain
- Grades 2-12 students who score below level 5 in at least one language domain



WIDA Screener for Kindergarten

Grade	Domains	Qualifies for Service	Does NOT Qualify for Service
Kindergarten 1st Semester	Listening & Speaking (L/S)	Any domain score below 5	All domain scores are 5 or above
Kindergarten 2nd Semester	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	Any domain score below 5	All domain scores are 5 or above
Grade 1 (1st Semester)			

WIDA Screener

Grade 1 (2nd semester)	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	Any domain score below 5	All domain scores are 5 or above
Grade 2-12			

(NCDPI, "NC State-Specific Guidance")

EL Status

If your child is screened based on the HLS process, you receive an initial notification letter informing you of your child's screening results. The parent notification letter also includes one of the **EL identifications** below.

<i>Never</i>	Your child was screened for EL services and based on the scores they received, they did not qualify as an English learner.
<i>Current</i>	Based on the home language survey process outcome, your child was screened for EL services and qualified as an English learner. Your child has the opportunity to receive services based on the school's language instruction educational program. You have the right to accept or decline this language support. However, your child will be assessed on the ELP test until reaching the state's exit criteria.
<i>Exited</i>	Your child has met the state's exit criteria in the annual statewide ELP assessment and is no longer in the EL program.
<i>Monitored Former English Learner</i>	Your child has exited the EL program and will be monitored for 4 years to ensure they continue to be successful academically.



Services

EL Services

Each school develops a **Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP)** to determine which services your child receives. These services are developed and implemented by the EL teacher at your child’s school. The EL teacher works in collaboration with classroom teachers and other staff to ensure your child is receiving the best possible instruction based on their language learning needs. The services are generally described on the child’s annual EL Plan. Services may include the following:

EL Service	Description
Instruction for English Language Development	Instructional programs that are designed to develop the social and academic English language proficiency of your child. Typical programs in North Carolina include English as a Second Language, Bilingual Programs, or Sheltered Instruction.
Academic Supports	Academic supports specific to English learners that are used in classes/courses to support your child’s English language development. Some examples of those supports include classroom modifications on assignments/projects, accommodations on assessments, use of first language resources, etc.
Testing Accommodations	State and federal laws require that all students participate in the Annual Testing Program. English learners who score below Level 5.0 Bridging on the reading domain of the WIDA Screener/ACCESS for ELLs are eligible to receive state-approved EL testing accommodations on all state tests. Accommodations such as the use of a bilingual word-to-word dictionary, reading assessments aloud, extended time, separate setting, ensure a more equitable opportunity for English learners to participate (NCDPI. “Guidance for Testing Students Identified as English Learners”).
Annual State English Language Proficiency Assessment	ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs are annual English language proficiency assessments currently used in North Carolina. All current ELs are required to be assessed annually. NC has developed annual growth targets for each EL based on their initial ACCESS score with a goal to exit the student from EL identification in five years. The assessment is usually administered in the February/March time frame. Parents/Caregivers of current EL students receive notification of testing in January each year.

At the beginning of the academic school year, you are notified of your child’s English language proficiency, EL Status, and the EL services provided by the school’s EL teacher. It is important to know that at any time, as a parent/guardian, you may inquire about, request, or decline any EL services based on the needs of your child. However, **declining services does not change your child’s identification as an EL and they should continue to be assessed annually on the state-adopted English language proficiency assessment until they meet the state-identified exit criteria.**



Assessment

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment

The English language proficiency assessment currently used by North Carolina is the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learner (ACCESS for ELLs). If your child is instructed using the NC Extended Content Standards, your child is eligible to participate in the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs test in place of the ACCESS for ELLs. This alternate assessment for the ACCESS for ELLs test is for students in grades 1-12 who are classified as ELs and have significant cognitive disabilities that prevent their meaningful participation in the regular ACCESS for ELLs test. Unique features of this test include simplified language, repetition of questions, increased graphics, and larger testing materials (NCDPI. "Guidance for Testing Students Identified as English Learners").

Based on the results of the language proficiency assessment, your child will be assigned proficiency levels in each of the following language domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing. (See Figure 1.0)

These proficiency levels are represented by a letter, a number, and a label depending on the ELP assessment that your child completes: ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. (See Figure 1.1 & 1.2)

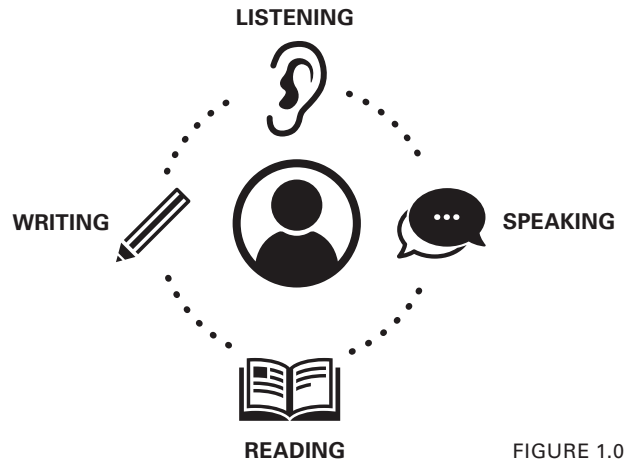


FIGURE 1.0

FIGURE 1.1

ACCESS for ELLs Assessment

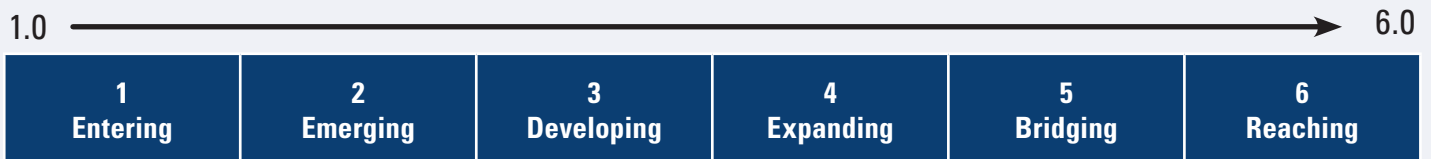
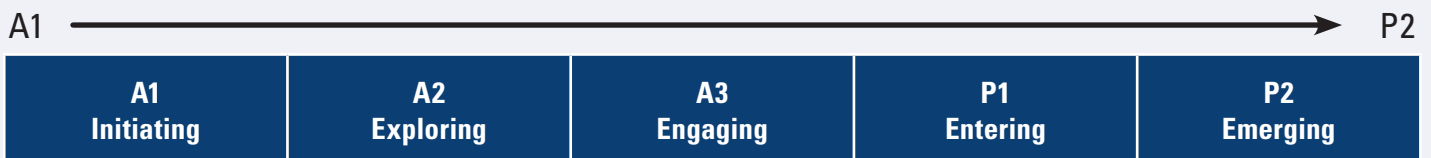


FIGURE 1.2

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Assessment



Your child's proficiency level determines the EL Status and the specific services and supports for which they are eligible.

Current scores on the annual state ELP assessment are used to determine progress towards English proficiency (NCDPI, "Calculating EL Progress"), appropriate EL services, specific language proficiency needs, your child's exit status, etc.

Every academic year, the school sends home your child’s **Individual Student Report**. This report shows your child’s scores in eight different categories. Four of these categories are the language domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. These four language domain scores are combined to create four additional score types:

The **oral language category** is a combination of your child’s Listening and Speaking scores.

The **literacy category** is a combination of your child’s Reading and Writing scores.

The **comprehension category** is a combination of your child’s Listening and Reading scores. It depends more on the Reading score than on the Listening score.

The **overall category** is a combination of all four language domain scores. It depends more on the Reading and Writing scores than on the Listening and Speaking scores.



For each of the eight categories on the Individual Student Report, there are two scores:

Proficiency level scores place your child’s current skills within the six WIDA English Language Proficiency Levels (Proficiency levels are not related to a student’s grade level). The bottom of the Individual Student Report describes the language skills typical of your child’s proficiency level.

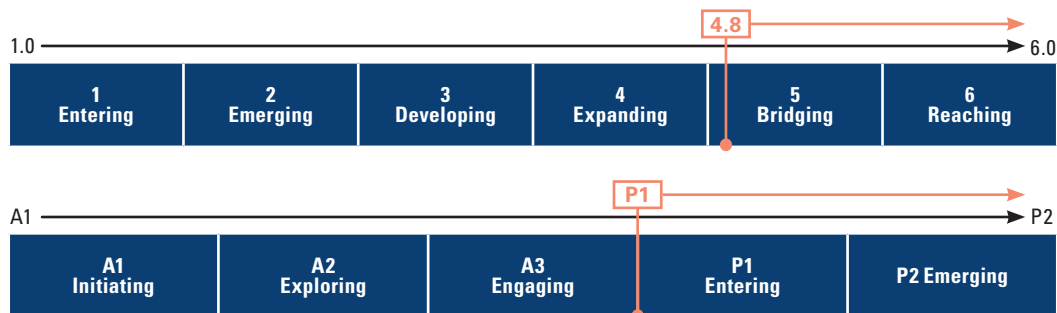
Scale scores are precise measures of how your child did on the test. They take into account your child’s grade level and the difficulty of the test items your child completed. Teachers use these scores to understand how much your child’s English language skills have grown since the last time your child took the Annual ELP Accessment (WIDA, “ACCESS for ELLs”; “Alternate ACCESS for ELLs”).



Exit

Exiting EL Status

Your child must meet the criteria set by the state in order to be moved out of the EL program. **The state requires a student identified as an EL to reach an overall composite score of 4.8 or above on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment, or score an overall composite of P1 or higher for two consecutive years on the Alternate ACCESS assessment (SBE, “Policy TEST-011”).**



If your child exits the EL program, they are no longer required to take the annual ELP test nor are they eligible to receive EL accommodations on state tests or EL services. Your child will be monitored for 4 years after they exit EL identification to ensure they continue to perform well in school.

There are some circumstances where a student may receive EL services again after reaching the exit criteria. This process includes a very thorough review of a student’s academic performance and discussion between parents and teachers to determine the most appropriate plan for the student.



How does my child learn

English at School?

SECTION 2

This section explains the English Language Development standards that NC uses as your child learns social (verbal and body language used to communicate with others daily) and academic English (language used at school to talk about specific subjects). You will learn about the progression of English language skills and the developmental expectations as your child moves through their different grade levels and eventually exits their EL status, achieving English proficiency.

As mentioned in the previous section, each school uses a Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) to decide which services your child receives. These services are developed and implemented by the EL teacher at your child's school. The EL teacher works in collaboration with classroom teachers and other staff to ensure your child is receiving the best possible instruction based on their language learning needs. The services are generally described on the child's annual EL Plan.

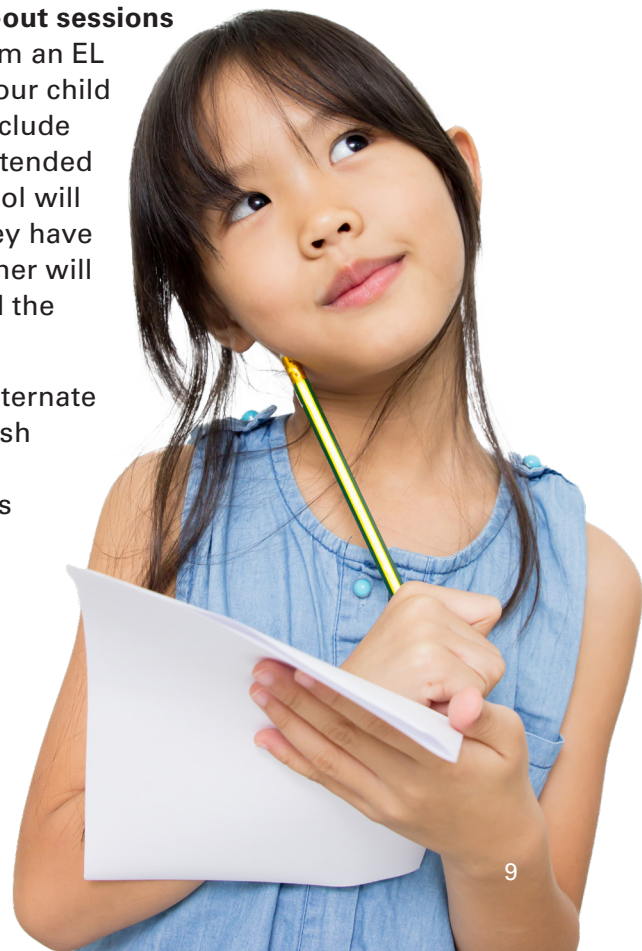
Services may include the following:

- Instruction for English language development
- Academic supports in classes/courses: classroom modifications, testing accommodations, and/or others
- Testing accommodations on state assessments (NCDPI. "Guidance for Testing Students Identified as English Learners").

Some of the most common EL program services include **pull-out sessions** from a child's content classes to receive direct instruction from an EL teacher; and **push-in sessions** in which the EL teacher joins your child in some of their regular classes. Other LIEP structures may include newcomer centers, co-teaching, sheltered instruction, and extended instruction (after school or summer school). Your child's school will notify you of the services available for your child and how they have determined these services and supports. Your child's EL teacher will also share information with you that will help you understand the curriculum implemented in your school.

Your child's EL Plan also includes their ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs scores to determine progress towards English proficiency (NCDPI, Calculating EL Progress"), appropriate EL services, specific language proficiency needs, and your child's exit status.

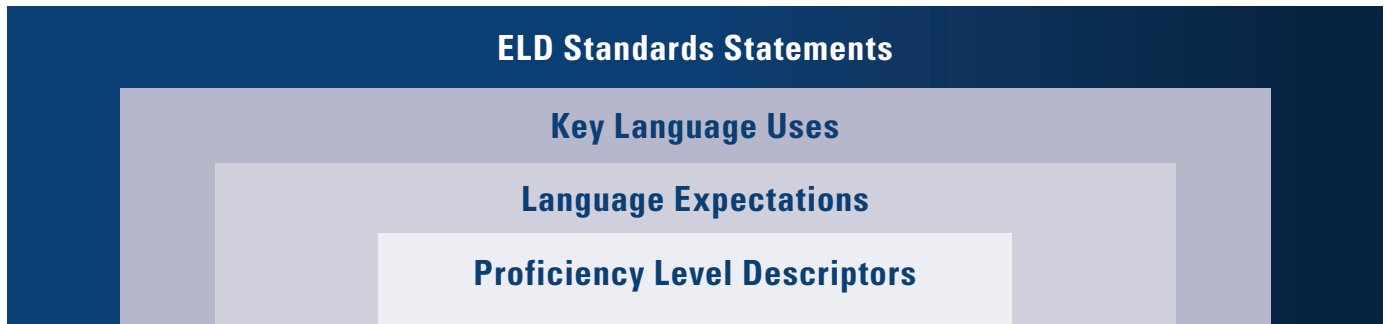
You may contact your school if you have questions about the LIEP and your child's EL Plan.



English Language Development (ELD) Standards

The NC ELD Standard Course of Study reflects that English learners are best served when they learn content and language together in a learning environment that utilizes home language and cultural knowledge to engage and facilitate learning.

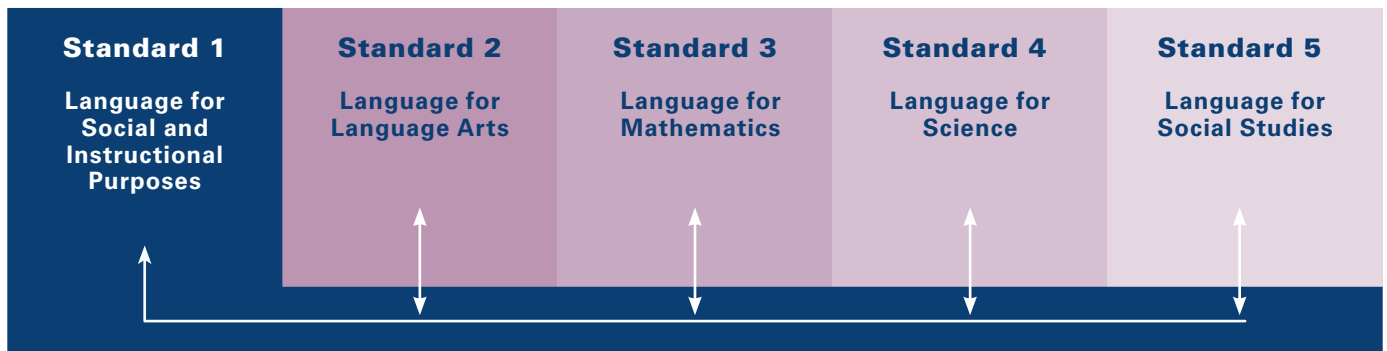
The NC ELD standards serve as the framework that will guide your child’s school in developing the curriculum and instruction of their English learners. These standards should be complemented by a content-rich curriculum and effective pedagogical approaches within an equitable educational program for your child.



Adapted from WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition ©

ELD Standards Statements

The ELD standards statements show expectations of language use for your child in the service of learning—in other words, expectations for the English your child will learn to use for thinking and doing across all content areas for social and instructional purposes. ELD Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes applies language across the entire range of educational settings and works both independently from and in conjunction with ELD Standards Statements 2-5 that are content-specific (WIDA 2020).



Adapted from WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition ©

Key Language Uses

The ELD Standards employ Key Language Uses that describe how language is used in school across all disciplines and content areas. The Key Language Uses will help your child’s teachers provide language focus and coherence in the lessons they create when integrating content and language. The Key Language Uses share some common aspects across disciplines and content areas to strengthen your child’s English language proficiency in each.

NARRATE

Highlights language to convey real or imaginary experiences through stories and histories. Your child’s stories will serve many purposes, including to instruct, entertain, teach, or support their arguments.

INFORM

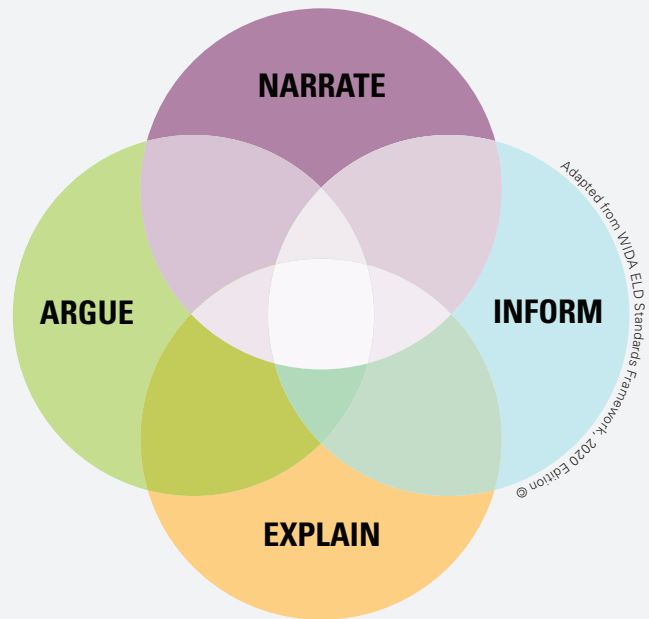
Highlights language to provide factual information. As your child conveys information, they define, describe, compare, contrast, organize, categorize, or classify concepts, ideas, or events.

EXPLAIN

Highlights language to give an account for how things work or why things happen. As your child explains, they are able to express the inner workings of natural, man-made, and social experiences.

ARGUE

Highlights language to justify claims using evidence and reasoning. Arguments can be used to advance or defend your child’s ideas or solutions, change their audience’s point of view, bring about action, or accept a position or evaluation of an issue.



Language Expectations

The ELD Standards incorporate Language Expectations that set goals for your child’s content-driven language learning. They support the ELD Standards Statements and Key Language Uses and make visible the language associated with the content areas (WIDA 2020).

The Language Expectations combine the four individual language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) into two more inclusive modes of communication: interpretive and expressive.

Modes of Communication

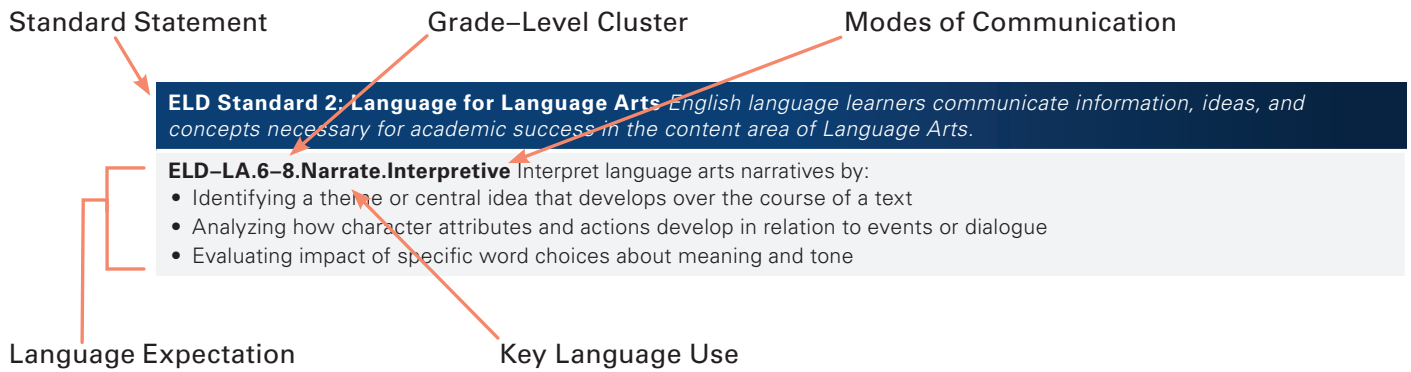
Interpretive

The interpretive communication mode includes listening, reading, and viewing.

Expressive

The expressive communication mode includes speaking, writing, and representing.

In the example below, you can see how the ELD Standards and their Key Language Uses, Language Expectations, and Modes of Communication guide your child’s teachers in providing language instruction that helps your child achieve academic English language proficiency.



Proficiency Level Descriptors

The ELD Standards also use Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs) to describe language development progress for activities that allow your child’s teachers to target Language Expectations for your child.

The Proficiency Descriptors also explain how your child makes progress and develops language across the six levels of English language proficiency.

Criteria	Proficiency Level					
	End of Level 1	End of Level 2	End of Level 3	End of Level 4	End of Level 5	End of Level 6
DISCOURSE Organization of Language	Understand how coherent texts (spoken, written, multimodal) are created...					
	around topics (my family) with words, pictures, phrases or chunks of language	around topics (all about me) with repetition, rhyming and common language patterns	around topics (all about me) with repetition, rhyming, and other language patterns with short sentences	to meet a purpose (to inform, narrative, entertain) through multiple related sentences	to meet a purpose in a series of extended sentences	to meet a purpose in a short text

Descriptors

The PLDs are described in detail per grade level to help your child’s teachers plan their instruction. Reach out to your child’s school to receive specific information about services available for your child to develop their language skills and opportunities for you to engage in the process.



How do I help my child

Succeed at School?

SECTION 3

This section offers a set of strategies and online free resources in English and other languages to help you advocate for your child and help your child develop English language skills at home.

Activities to Do at Home



Reading Strategies

- Read about an event you and your child attended, or talk about an event you shared.
- Read to your child or have your child read to you every day.
- Provide a time and space without distractions for your child to read every day.
- Listen to audiobooks and talk about the stories (Public libraries have collections of audiobooks students may checkout online or at a physical location).
- Encourage your child to re-read favorite books and tell you about the story they are reading.
- Ask your child questions about the story. Say something like, “Why do you think ___ about ___?”, “Who are the main characters?”, “What do you think will happen next?”
- Encourage reading as a free-time activity.
- Help your child pick books that are at the right level, but not too difficult. The aim is to give your child lots of successful reading experiences.
- Talk about what you are doing (Going to the doctor, getting some groceries, cooking together).



Writing Strategies

- Keep notebooks or paper available as well as pencils and pens.
- Ask your child to tell you stories as they make drawings or write about them.
- Encourage your child to practice writing, starting with their name, words, sentences, and paragraphs as they progress in their language learning.
- Play puzzles and other games that help increase vocabulary.
- Celebrate your child’s drawings and writing.
- Ask your child to write down notes and lists for you.
- Tell your child your family’s story and encourage them to draw and write it down.
- Work with your child to research information related to a topic of their interest. Ask your child to create a brochure, flyer, or “How To” manual or guide describing/explaining the topic, or how to do something.
- Under your supervision, help your child use a computer to research a topic or communicate with friends and family. Your child can also use the computer to write their own pieces or pieces you write together.

Activities to Do at Home *cont.*

¡Colorín Colorado! Reading and Writing Resources for Parents: This resource provides a multitude of resources to support the education of English Learners. Resources are available in Spanish and English. The first link is for reading tip sheets for parents to support reading at home. These are provided by age and grade and translated into multiple languages. The second link provides ideas to help parents support their children's writing at home. These tip sheets are available in 13 languages.

Colorin Colorado. "Reading Tip Sheets for Parents." www.colorincolorado.org/reading-tip-sheets-parents.

Accessed 8 Jan. 2022.

Colorin Colorado. "Writing at Home." www.colorincolorado.org/writing-home. Accessed 8 Jan. 2022.

NCDPI ELA Parent Guides: The NCDPI ELA Parent Guides contain activities and strategies to support parents with understanding the English Language Arts Standards. These guides are available in English and Spanish and offer resources for each grade level.

NCDPI ELA Team. "Parent Guides for English Language Arts." Academic Standards Division. ncdpi.instructure.com/courses/914/pages/parent-guides. Accessed 13 Nov. 2021.

Online Resources to Help you Advocate for Your Child

US Department of Education Resources: The US Department of Education has resources for students and parents to know the rights they have to ensure their English Learner has meaningful access to education programs. These fact sheets are translated into multiple languages.

United States, Department of Education. "Schools' Civil Rights Obligations to English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents." www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html. Accessed 8 Jan. 2022.

The English Learner Family Toolkit: The English Learner Family Toolkit was developed by the United States Department of Education to support families in meeting their children's needs. It has information in regards to enrolling your child in school, expectations of US schools, and services available to English learners. This toolkit is still in development.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA). "English Learner Family Toolkit."

ncela.ed.gov/family-toolkit. Accessed 21 Jan. 2022.

Center for Parent Information and Resources Article: Center for Parent Information and Resources offers a selection of articles to empower Spanish-Speaking parents. The articles are available in English and Spanish.

Center for Parent Information and Resources. "Tools That Empower Spanish-Speaking Parents." July 2017.

www.parentcenterhub.org/tools-for-spanish-speaking-parents/. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

3 Parent Tips for Advocacy Website: This website provides parents with ways to help advocate for your students in school. This resource is only available in English.

Dalien, Suzie. "Three Parent Tips for Advocacy in ESL." specialresource.com/3-parent-tips-for-advocacy-in-esl.

Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

Questions to Ask Your Child's Teacher Article: These articles provide suggested questions you can ask your child's teachers. The second article specifically offers potential questions based on the time of year and grade level of the child. This resource is only available in English.

David, Julie. "50 Questions to Ask at Parent-Teacher Conferences." www.signupgenius.com/school/parent-teacher-conferences-questions.cfm. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.



Online Resources to Help Your Child Succeed at School

At-Home Learning Project (UNC-TV and NCDPI): PBS North Carolina and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction collaborated to provide at-home learning support for families. Resources include online lesson Teacher Time for Early Learners, Classroom Connection for elementary students, and At Home Learning for grades 6-12.

PBS North Carolina. "At-Home Learning Project (UNC-TV and NCDPI)." www.pbsnc.org/at-home-learning/. Accessed 8 Jan. 2022.

NCDPI Rethink Education Resources: The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction developed a collection of educational resources to support parents. These are available in English and Spanish.

NCDPI Rethink Education. "Rethink Education Resources for Parents and Guardians." North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/funding-opportunities/rethink-educational-models-grant/rethink-education-resources-parents-and-guardians. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

Sesame Street in Communities Website: Sesame Street in Communities provides resources and activities for parents and community organizations. These resources can be searched by topic or age. This is available in English and Spanish.

Sesame Street Communities. "Parent Resources." sesamestreetincommunities.org/. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

The North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals STEM Activity Sheets: The North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals has created six STEM activity sheets for parents. These are designed to be done with materials you can find in your home. These activity sheets include videos in English and Spanish.

North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals. "STEM Activities." www.thencshp.org/stem-activities. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

WIDA Family Engagement Resources: Believing that families play a key role in their children's language development and possess a wealth of knowledge about their children's language use in home and community environments, WIDA has provided an offering of resources for families to engage in their child's English language development. These documents explain EL status, language testing. These resources are available in the following languages: Arabic, Dari, English, Pashto, Simplified Chinese, and Spanish.

WIDA. "Family Engagement: Resources to Strengthen Connections With Families." wida.wisc.edu/teach/learners/engagement. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022

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The NCDPI ESL/Title III Team hopes this guide assists you in understanding the meaning of the EL identification process, the English language development standards, and access resources to support at-home learning to help your child's English language development. It is important that you, as your child's parent/caregiver, reach out to your child's school to learn more about the services and opportunities offered in your school community based on this guidance. For more information about the state-specific ESL/Title III guidance for schools, visit bit.ly/NCELDwebpage.



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WIDA. "North Carolina English Language Learner Identification and Placement Guidance Document 2021-2022." wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/id-placement/NC-ID-Placement-Guidance.pdf. Accessed 6 Nov. 2021.

WIDA. *WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition: Kindergarten-Grade 12*. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, 2020.



ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)/TITLE III/OFFICE OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

